

# EVENING STAR.

LADY AND SIR JOHN FRANKLIN.

A Ballad for the 20th Century.

BY MRS. MARIANNA DENISON.

[Our readers are aware that the expedition of Dr. Kane, is about sailing in search of Sir John Franklin. The following poem on the subject will be read with interest at the present time. It is by a well known writer, now a resident of Washington, whose poetic and prose contributions will be freely furnished to the Star:]

BOY.

"Sing me a ballad, mother,  
Of mount, or wood, or stream;"

MOTHER.

"Shall I sing you a fairy ballad?  
Of romance idly dream?  
I will tell you of Lady Franklin;  
A true and stirring theme."

THE MOTHER SINGS.

"Lady Franklin sits at her window,  
Watching the lambent dyes,  
That cover with sunset glory  
The walls of the western skies;  
She shades with her spectral fingers,  
Her sad but beautiful eyes.

In the far, dim space, the city  
Looms through the purple haze,  
And the golden spires of the churches,  
In the blue of heaven blaze;  
But under the lady's window  
Trembles the shining maize.

She can catch, in the fading distance,  
A glimpse of the ocean brave,  
Where once to its treacherous keeping,  
Her fondest gift she gave,  
But alas! though a home for many,  
It is her husband's grave.

For nine long years she has waited,  
Watching and hoping in vain,  
And she thinks that the holy angels  
Pity her sorrow and pain,  
And will call her before the morrow,  
Back to her God again.

And she prays for strength to cross over  
The chilly river of death;  
'Take not this bitter chalice  
From thy servant, Lord,' she saith,  
And paler grew her temples,  
Fainter her shortened breath.

Why rings the great bell eastward  
Its peals on the air?  
And why from their slim church spires  
Do the bells ring everywhere?  
It is not the hour of wassail,  
It is not the hour of prayer.

And hark! to the fitful murmurs,  
That float on the distant breeze,  
Till they seem in the gathered tumult,  
Like a voice in the mulberry trees;  
'Why is this strange commotion,  
And what forebodings these?'

The baying of deep mouthed cannon  
Times with the clanging bells,  
And a hoarser roar of voices,  
To heaven's grand temple swells;  
Surely this brazen welcome  
Some great, good tidings tell.

Lady Franklin sits at her window,  
Watching the sunset dyes;  
Her little maid looks from another  
Over the northern skies;  
'Lady a crowd comes hither;  
See how the white dust flies.'

Springs to her feet the lady,  
Flingeth her casement wide,  
And a strange look of triumph  
Mingles with one of pride;  
Banners and braided pennons,  
Are floating side by side.

Lords in their rich attire,  
Peasants with foreheads bare,  
Ladies weeping and sobbing,  
And youths and maidens fair,  
With wild and long hurraing,  
And broken notes of prayer.

And clarions, drums and trumpets,  
Burst on the lady's ear;  
But she still unconscious standeth,  
As in a trance of fear;  
Till the lusty shout goes upward,  
'Sir John, Sir John is here!'

'O! little maid support me;  
Come to my side awhile;  
Could I forget that bearing?  
Could I mistake that smile?  
Or can a blessed vision  
Thus my rapt sense beguile?'

She raiseth her brow to heaven,  
Her wasted hands likewise,  
And thus like a holy scripture,  
Stands with uplifted eyes;  
Then with a shriek of rapture,  
Quick to the hall she flies.

There with a bronzed visage,  
And there with outstretched hands,  
And a bosom wildly heaving,  
Sir John in his glory stands;  
And thus to his gentle partner,  
'This here of polar lands.

'Oh! tender and faithful creature,  
'O! wife of my very soul,  
I have prayed for this hour of triumph;  
Far off at the icy pole;  
And God hath in mercy heard me,  
'O! wife of my very soul.'

Within his arms she hath fainted,  
As she murmured, mine once more;  
And smothering her faded tresses,  
He kneels on the painted floor;  
Her lips, her eyes, her temples,  
He kiseth them o'er and o'er."

BOY.

"Did the lady die then, mother?"

MOTHER.

"O! no, my child, oh! no;  
She lived with Sir John Franklin,  
Till their locks were white as snow;  
And the world will long remember,  
That mighty triumph won,  
And that pair so true and tender,  
Lady Franklin and good Sir John."

THE WIDOW.

To be alone in a crowd is indeed terrible but to be alone with grief in the midst of the thoughtless is a thousand times worse. So hard is it to stifle back the sigh and keep down the tear, so hard the struggle that the heart's bitterness may not be read of men.

We have seen the anguish of the widow's face when first mingled with society. The effort to keep even serenity was even a melancholy one: a little glance of devotion from the fond husband to his wife, or a kind attention and the tears started till the eyes were brimmed. And then we have noticed how the hand has clenched around some trifling object, a fan the stirring of the reticule: how the lips were pressed together, the quick, flitting, hard smile—the quivering of the chin: and we have thought, oh! what agony must she be suffering, merely to hide her own sorrow that lies deeper down, gnawing at the heart.

Wonder not that such trials add years to the brow, and saps away the freshness of youth and beauty. If she has loved truly, and that love has not been returned—if the husband was kind and tender, supplying the place of mother, father, brother and sister: if he has watched and cared for her in sickness and health: then indeed must she feel he loss an irreparable one.

At any rate, her situation is not a subject of the cruel mirth that so often finds its way into newspapers, and in the comment upon thoughtless tongues. It wounds the sensitive, and adds a few more drops to their already full cups of misery. For our parts we can see neither wit nor sense in the attempt to create smiles of laughter at the expense of the poor widow. She has trials enough with poverty, which her honorable pride forbids her to make public. She has often lifted her head, from a loving bosom that has sheltered her in weal and woe: to cringe before the cold civilities of the shop clerks. She has gone away from the tomb to eat the bread of dependence, perchance and moisten her scant food with her tears.

God help the poor widow in her loneliness and forgive those who with careless jibes and cutting mirth make her soul feel a double poverty.

The New York Evening Post mentions as among the Sunday recreations of that city: Policemen smoking cigars in the doors of porter-houses; boys bathing in the river: boys pitching pennies on the wharves: itinerant lecturers in the German and English languages, along the rivers: young men congregated about engine houses, using profane and blasphemous expressions, and annoying quiet citizens in various ways. How different is our own Moral City!

PEN VS. SWORD.—"What!" said an ex volunteer to a comrade whom he found engaged in the difficult vocation of driving a lot of swine, "I thought I left you in the army." "You see I have abandoned the sword, and taken to the pen," was the reply.

SAUCY.—A school mistress asked a child what she spelt. The child hesitated. "What do you do when I look at you?" said the mistress. "Thupint," replied the pupil.

Politeness does much in business. An impudent clerk can do more injury in a store than its owner's neglect to advertise his goods.

COMPLIMENTARY.—A gentleman who had listened attentively to a long, diffuse and highly ornamented prayer, was asked by one of the members, "if he did not think their minister was very gifted in prayer?" "Yes," he replied, "I think it as good a prayer as was ever offered to a congregation."

If a fellow has nothing when he gets married, and the gal has nothing, is her things hizen, or is his things hurn?

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